

## FARMING IN THE NORTHWEST.

## Something About Wheat Growing in the Great Red River Valley in the Dakotas.

A correspondent of the Charlotte Observer, a citizen of North Carolina, recently took a trip to the Dakotas and has written a very readable letter setting forth his impressions of the Northwest. From his letter we clip the following extracts about Dakota farming:

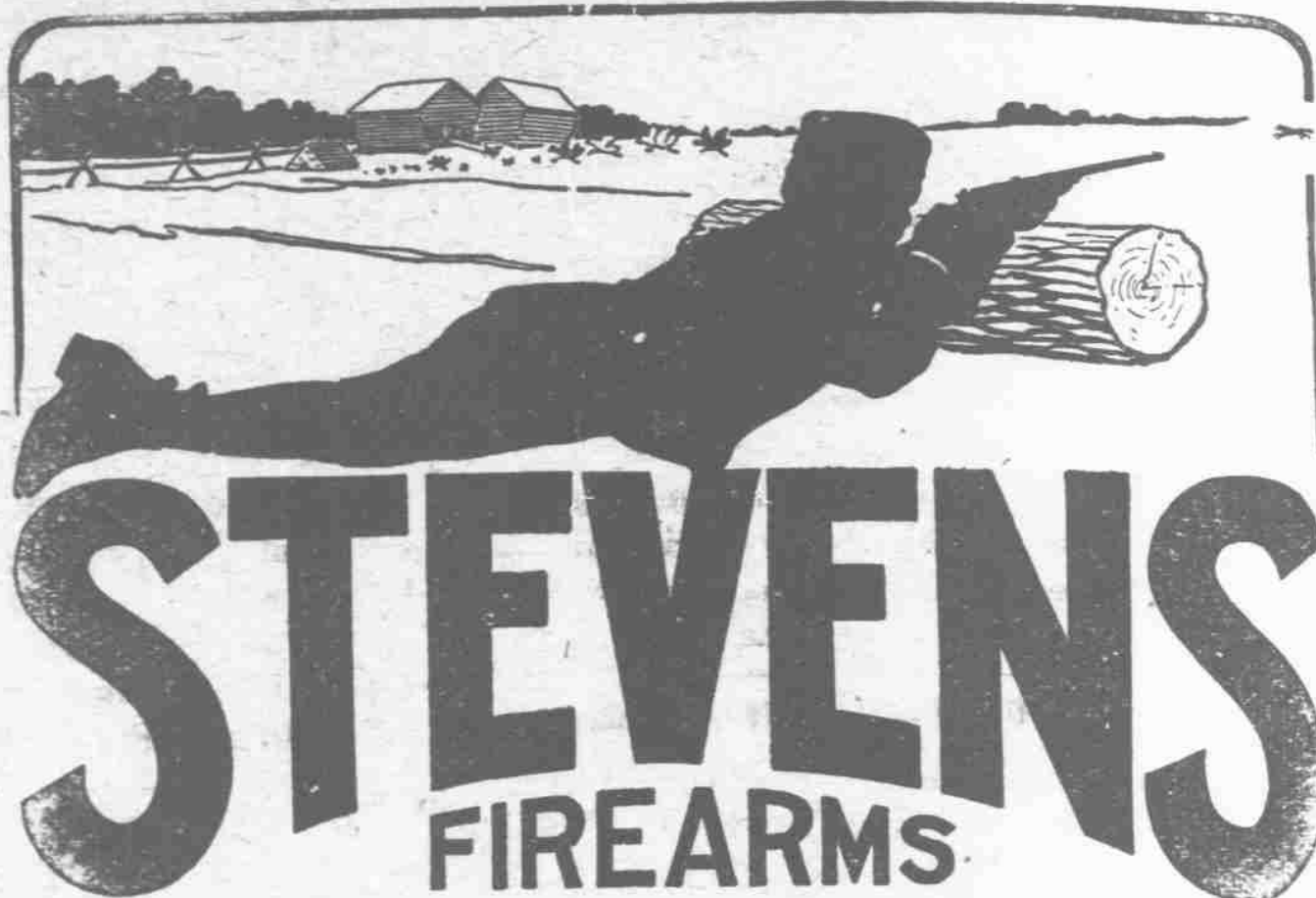
The Red River, according to the information at hand, will be set down as having its head-waters somewhere south of Fargo and flowing north on the line between North Dakota and Minnesota into Manitoba and emptying into Lake Winnipeg, which is one of the estuaries of Hudson Bay.

This valley is a great wheat-producing section and probably has no superior in that line in all of North America. In width, from east to west, varying from 50 to 100 miles, it is a dead level, flat as a pancake, an ideal prairie. The soil is black and very fertile. A guess is not hazarded as to the yield per acre. A statement has been made that the average yield of wheat for the whole State of North Dakota this year was 20 bushels per acre. No barnyard manure or other fertilizer is put upon the land. No provision for saving manures of any kind is made except by truckers and they conduct their operations only near the larger towns. The price of these lands is from \$20 to \$30 per acre, \$30 being very high and \$20 very low for good land. An advertisement in a Fargo paper is called to mind, wherein the owner of a section, 640 acres, located on a railroad, not far from Fargo, on which were good dwelling houses, barns, outhouses, etc., offered it for sale at \$22.50 per acre. He stated that neighboring lands were being held at \$25, but that he would sell at the price offered as an inducement to prompt trade—he wished to get away before winter set in.

This is the country of the "bonanza farmer," who cultivates hundreds and sometimes thousands of acres in one holding, sowing and reaping upon a large scale and being able, on account of the grandeur of his operations, to succeed upon a smaller per cent of net profit than if he were cultivating smaller holdings. Of course there are many who are not bonanza farmers, but the rule is large farms even if they are not bonanza farms. In approaching Fargo, through the valley on the Minnesota side, one is struck with the fact that the country seems, from the railroad train, to be sparsely settled, and the farm houses to be far apart. It is said that the tendency is now decidedly in the direction of dividing up the holdings and of the passing of the bonanza farmer. Their wheat threshing arrangements is somewhat different from ours. The outfit consists of a combined traction or road and stationary engine which draws, upon three trucks, the separator and mechanical devices, a bunk-shack and

a cook-shack. The farmer is not at the expense either of feeding or lodging the machine hands and all that he is responsible for is keeping the wheat in the straw "to" the thresher and having bags or portable bins ready to receive the grain after it has been separated from the straw and weighed. The price per thousand pounds for threshing is something more for wheat in the shock than for wheat that is stacked, because the machinery has to be taken up and set down more than once if it is in the shock, whereas if it is stacked a location is made in the stack yard and the work is done at one setting down. Wheat is seldom stacked, however, unless the farmer is anxious to clear his fields and begin upon his fall plowing; for it must be remembered that as early as the middle of November there is enough frost in the ground to interfere with plowing, even in a mild fall, as this has been.

North Dakota is interesting because it is so new and young. Here is a great Commonwealth, teeming with prosperous towns and cities and rich and well-cultivated farms, supplied with all the comforts, luxuries and modern devices of civilization which less than a quarter of a century ago was a vast prairie covered in summer with sweet and succulent grasses that, when the first frost touched them as with a magician's wand, turned to well-cured and nutritious hay. Over these Elysian fields roamed and grew fat herds of elk and buffalo, whose only enemies were the predatory Indians and the white hunters and frontiersmen. What a transformation! A prominent citizen of Fargo tells of going with a partner, 18 years ago, to a point a couple of hundred miles southwest of Fargo and taking up some government land. They were 100 miles from any neighbors. They built a shack, put in a crop of potatoes, cut, cured and stacked 70 tons of buffalo hay and then went out to the little frontier settlement of Fargo to rest their faces and lay in provisions. Six weeks later they returned to their entry and found not a wisp of their 70 tons of hay. The elk had



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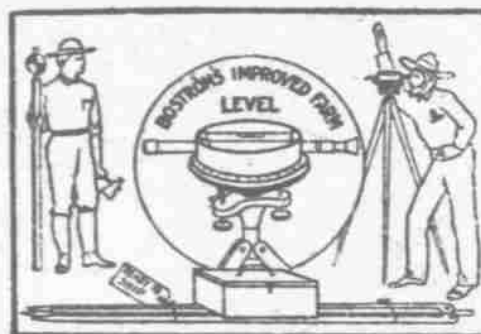
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